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24 February 1959

SCIENTIFIC AND POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF MAPPING IN ANTARCTICA

I. Mapping of Antarctica has both political and scientific significance.

A. Scientific significance long recognized by US (proposed by National Academy 1949) and by Soviets:

1. Essential to long-range planning of activities;

2. Necessary for plotting results of data (a) to determine character of continent and ice sheet, (b) weather and climate studies, (c) eventually for tracking of satellites (US and Soviet polar orbit vehicles), and (d) for resource exploration and charting;

3. Essential tool for long-range military preparedness.

a. Field operations require years to accomplish. Cannot be done swiftly only when emergencies arise.

B. Mapping basic in Soviet scientific activities. Essential to their integrated and comprehensive earth science research in the study of Earth as a whole.

1. Aggressively pursued from start of their IGY program, 1955-56;

2. Mapped and charted over 3,000-mile coastal zone (40°E-160°E);

3. Large-and medium- scale mapping begun;

a. Large-scale topographic and geologic mapping of Bunger Hills (OAZIS) and Mirnyy area.

b. 1:200,000 planned for overall area of their activity.

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apping has immediate and long-range political significance.

Provides evidence of sophisticated activity to support rights and claims:

1. Needed to determine whether Antarctica is continent or merely ice plateau tied to islands. Has direct bearing on sovereignty problem.
2. If Soviets map more than US, Soviet rights likely to outweigh US, particularly, in unclaimed sector where US rights now unchallenged.
3. Soviet leadership in international mapping would be unequivocal record of increased eminence of Soviets in Antarctica.

US vulnerable to Soviet propaganda that despite many years of US activity including large-scale [redacted] only small parts of continent mapped. (US aerial photography greatly limited due to lack of ground control) 25X1A

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